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Top Secret (26)

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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

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5 April 1967

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Approved For Release 2006/02/07 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001800010026-8

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

The Constituent Assembly is scheduled to start drafting the electoral laws on 6 April. The Military Directorate has reportedly discussed the question of whether to pick Premier Ky or Chief of State Thieu as a presidential candidate, but has not yet come to any final decision.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
North Vietnamese broadcasts and captured documents indicate that Communist leaders may have an exaggerated estimate of their success in South Vietnam (Paras. 1-4). The weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Paras. 5-7).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
The Constituent Assembly is scheduled to start drafting the electoral laws on 6 April (Para. 1). The Military Directorate reportedly deliberated last week on picking either Premier Ky or Chief of State Thieu to run for the presidency, but did not come to any decision (Paras. 2-4). Another civilian, Nguyen Dinh Quat, has entered the September presidential race (Para. 5).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

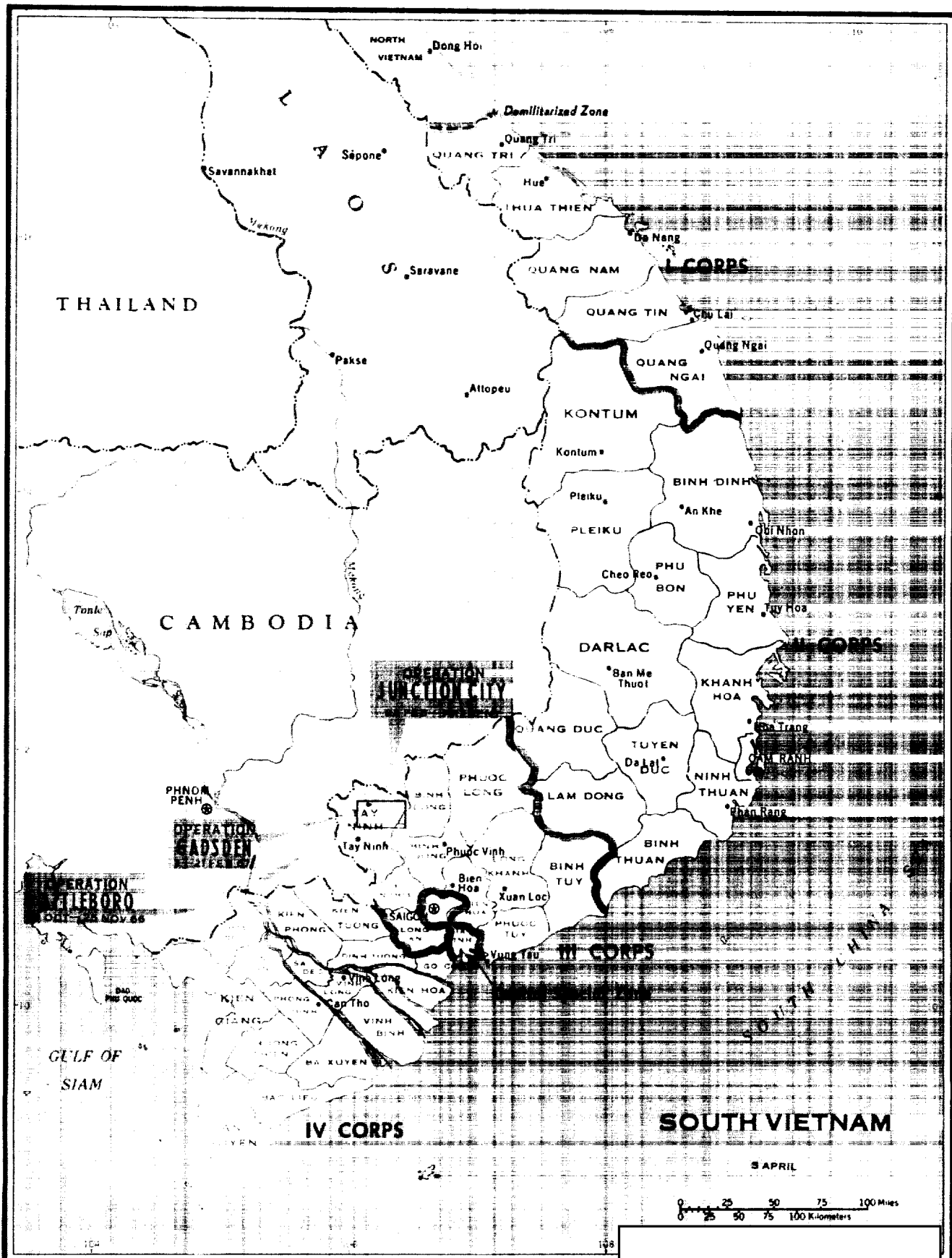
V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics from 1963

Through 26 March - 1 April
-Weapons and Personnel Losses
-Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Hanoi radio declared on 26 March that "over 8,300 enemy troops, mostly American GIs, were wiped out by the Liberation Armed Forces" during Operations GADSEN (1-21 February) and JUNCTION CITY (22 February - present) in northern Tay Ninh Province. In contrast to these figures, reported US military losses for these operations through 27 March were 231 killed and 1,121 wounded.

2. Although published Communist reports almost invariably inflate allied casualties for propaganda purposes, there are some indications in captured documents that the Communists actually may believe some of their exaggerated estimates of allied losses in South Vietnam. For example, a recently captured Communist directive prepared at the headquarters of Viet Cong Military Region 1 just north of Saigon declares that, "during the first six months of 1966," Communist forces "knocked out of action 112,500 enemy troops including 48,522 Americans." US military statistics list 2,497 American combat deaths and 15,018 wounded for this period. This directive, classified "Top Secret," also declares that during the first half of 1966 Communist forces in South Vietnam downed and damaged 1,429 allied aircraft. US reports indicate that during this period allied forces lost only 198 aircraft to hostile actions.

3. Another captured document, an "after action report" captured on 29 March, illustrates exaggerated Communist claims of successes in last year's Operation ATTLEBORO. Prepared by the Military Staff Department, Headquarters, South Vietnamese Liberation Army, and classified "Top Secret," this document claims that the Communists "destroyed" seven companies and one platoon of US forces. Losses such as this would mean that some 700-1,500 Americans were killed or wounded in Operation ATTLEBORO. The Viet Cong - allied casualty ratio is given in the document as one VC to 7.5 allied. US military officers report that

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American losses in this operation were 111 killed and 416 wounded compared with Viet Cong and North Vietnamese casualties of 1,089 killed and 44 captured.

4. It is not possible in all cases to tell if the captured documents contain genuine estimates intended for higher authorities or if they are intended mainly for propaganda use. Although it is unlikely that the grossly exaggerated figures noted above are flatly accepted by the Communist leadership, it is probable that a tendency by units in the South to inflate their performances may result in some distorted impressions on the part of leaders in Hanoi.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

5. American casualties were high again for the week 26 March - 1 April with 194 reported killed and 1,679 wounded. The number killed is more than double the weekly average for 1966 of 96 and the wounded total was about three times last year's weekly average of 528. This high number of casualties, running at more than 1,500 for the past several weeks, may be attributed at least in part to the increased aggressiveness of Communist forces throughout the country. In particular, the Communist regimental-size attack against an American force in Operation JUNCTION CITY, together with the results of other search-and-destroy operations, account for much of the over-all total.

6. Communist losses for the same week are also high with 2,373 reported killed. This figure is more than double the weekly average for 1966 of 1,068.

7. The week of 26 March - 1 April compared with the week of 19-25 Mar:

	<u>I. Viet Cong Incidents</u>	
	<u>19-25 Mar</u>	<u>26 Mar-1 Apr</u>
Attacks	45	44
Regimental.....	2	1
Company.....	9	5
Harassment	404	334
Terrorism	25	26
Sabotage	17	8
Propaganda	10	9
Antiaircraft	364	256
TOTAL INCIDENTS	865	677

II. Casualties

	VC/NVA		GVN	
	19-25 Mar	26 Mar-1 Apr	19-25 Mar	26 Mar-1 Apr
Killed	2,774	2,373	203	211
Wounded	-----	-----	633	606
Missing/ Captured	<u> *</u>	<u> *</u>	<u> 207 </u>	<u> 38 </u>
TOTALS	2,774	2,373	1,043	855

	US		FREE WORLD	
	19-25 Mar	26 Mar-1 Apr	19-25 Mar	26 Mar-1 Apr
Killed	274	194	10	19
Wounded	1,319	1,679	43	67
Missing/ Captured	<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>
TOTALS	1,593	1,873	54	86

III. Weapons Captured

	VC/NVA		GVN	
	19-25 Mar	26 Mar-1 Apr	19-25 Mar	26 Mar-1 Apr
Individual	750	Not	163	144
Crew-Served	<u> 42 </u>	Reported	<u> 6 </u>	<u> 2 </u>
TOTALS	792		169	146

*Field reporting of enemy captured figures is now based on a monthly count of POWs held in POW camps. Figures for enemy captured will thus be incorporated in the monthly "Personnel Losses" chart which appears in the Situation in South Vietnam.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Constituent Assembly is scheduled to reconvene on 6 April to begin drafting the laws governing the presidential and legislative elections this fall. The Directorate and the Armed Forces Congress have already publicly set the election of the president and the upper house for 1 September and the lower house for 1 October, and have requested that the assembly draw up the laws by the end of April. The assembly would probably like to defer the lower house elections to a later date since it will assume full legislative powers when the president takes office. The Directorate, however, has implicitly put the assembly on notice that the military leadership does not intend to let too much influence gravitate to the assembly. There could be some disagreement during assembly deliberations in the next few weeks over the Directorate's time sequence for the elections.

Directorate Deliberations Concerning the Military Candidate

2. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] it now appears that certain influential generals did attempt to grapple last week with the issue of choosing either Premier Ky or Chief of State Thieu as the military candidate for the presidency. What appears to be consistent in the otherwise conflicting accounts [REDACTED] is that the leading generals did not come to a final vote for one candidate or the other. Less clear is what discussions actually took place during a reported series of meetings at the end of March and what the group of ranking generals intends to do regarding the choice of Ky versus Thieu.

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3. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the eight military members of the Directorate, plus five other influential generals, met three times last week without reaching a

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decision on who should be the candidate. During the third meeting on 31 March, however, the 11 military leaders--with Ky and Thieu absent--took a vote on whether they should submit the question to a top-level military ballot; seven of the generals voted in favor of this proposal. Although the selection of a candidate remains unresolved for the time being, another meeting of the same group, with the possible exception of General Dang Van Quang, is supposed to be held on 10 April, [REDACTED]

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4. In the meantime, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Ky is pursuing his apparent tactics of not forcing a showdown with Thieu within the military, but relying instead on public opinion and broad civilian support to win him military endorsement. [REDACTED] Ky's latest tactic is to poll students in the Saigon area as to which of the two leaders is the most popular and why. Fortified with the results of the presumably favorable poll, Ky would hope to convince Thieu, through their respective advisers, to withdraw in the face of Ky's greater chances of winning.

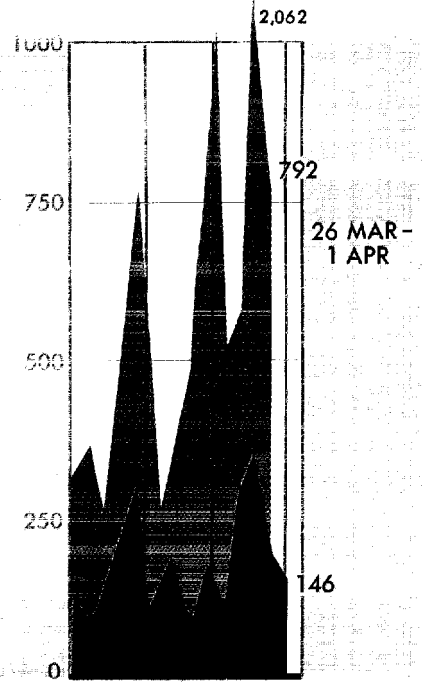
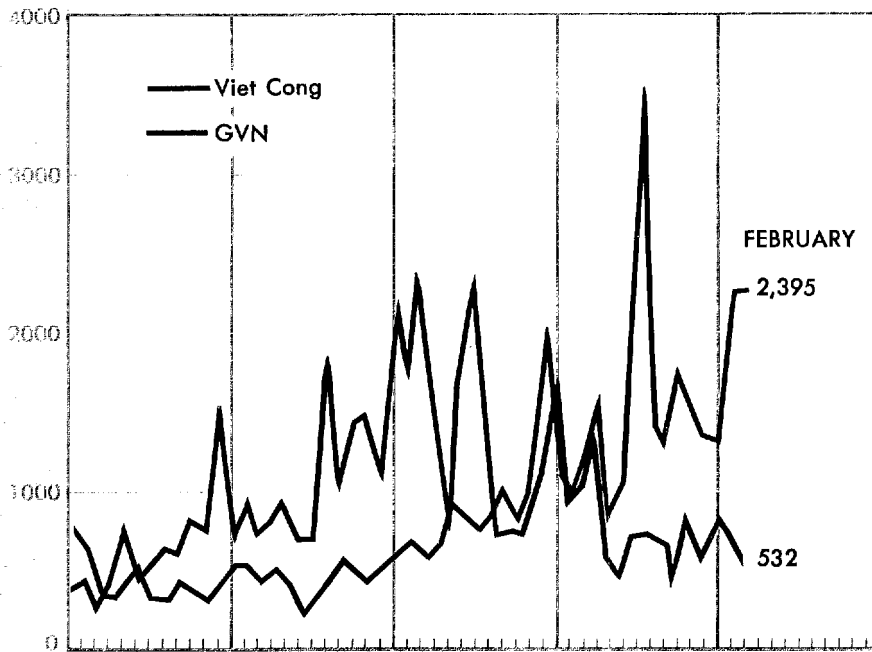
Another Civilian Candidate for the Presidency

5. Another civilian, Nguyen Dinh Quat, announced on 5 April that he will run for the presidency, according to press reports from both US and Vietnamese news services. Quat's prospects of election appear dim because of his "shady" business reputation and lack of political following. A Roman Catholic, born in North Vietnam, he is also considered to have radical political views. Quat, one of two unsuccessful opponents of Ngo Dinh Diem in the 1961 presidential election, is currently a member of the Constituent Assembly, representing Binh Duong Province, where he is reputed to have a large financial interest in a French plantation.

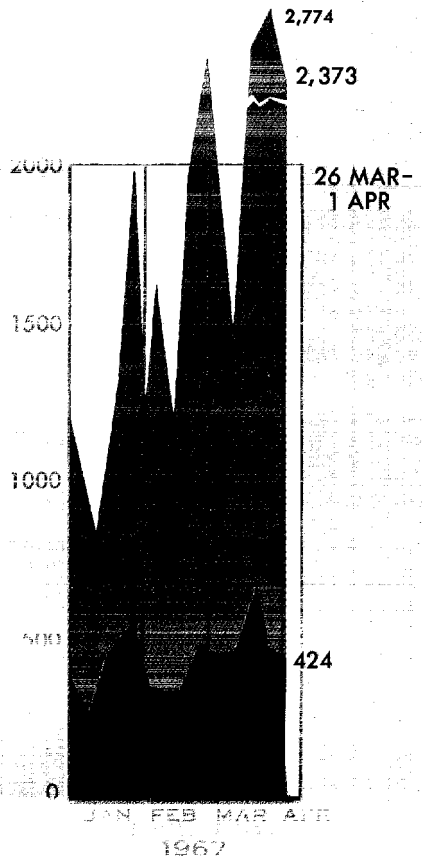
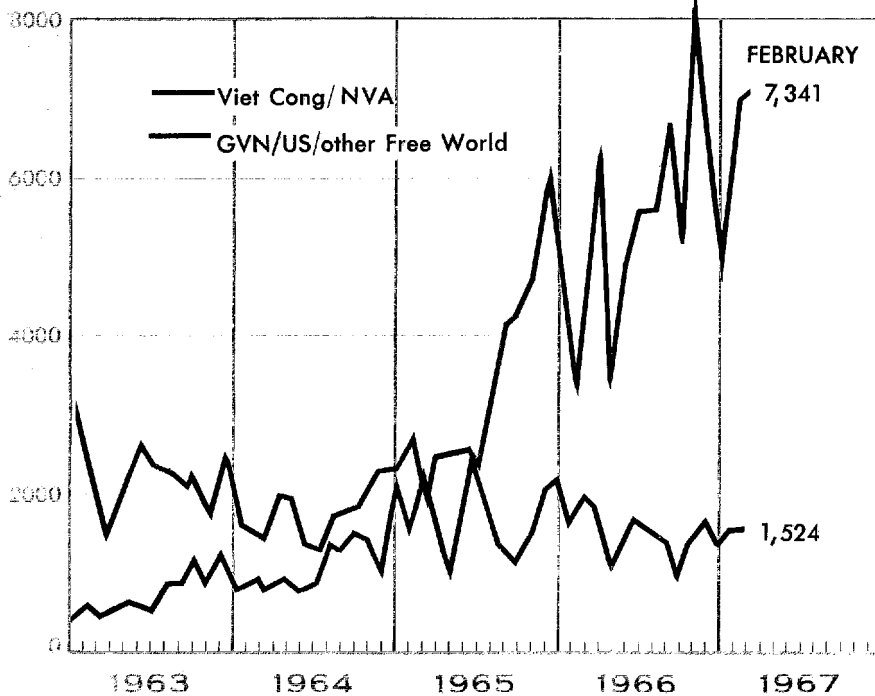
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Weapons Losses



Personnel Losses (Killed only)*

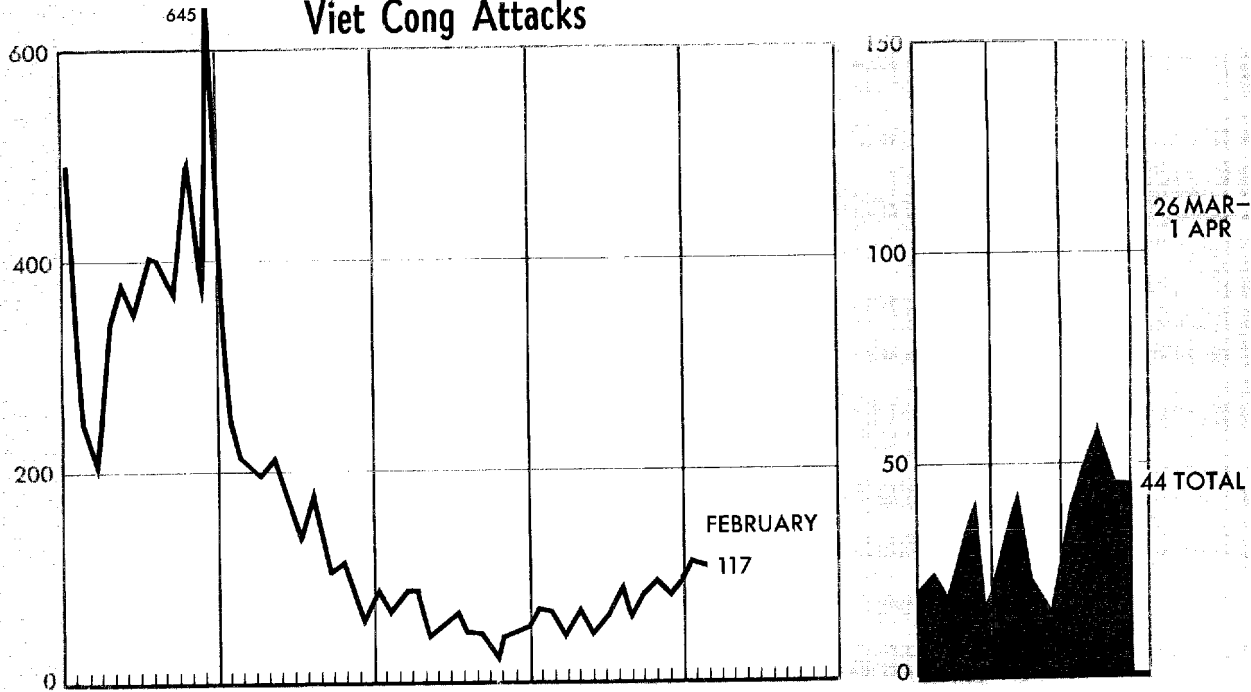


US Casualties to Date: Killed 8,346 Wounded 48,965 Captured 150 Missing 391

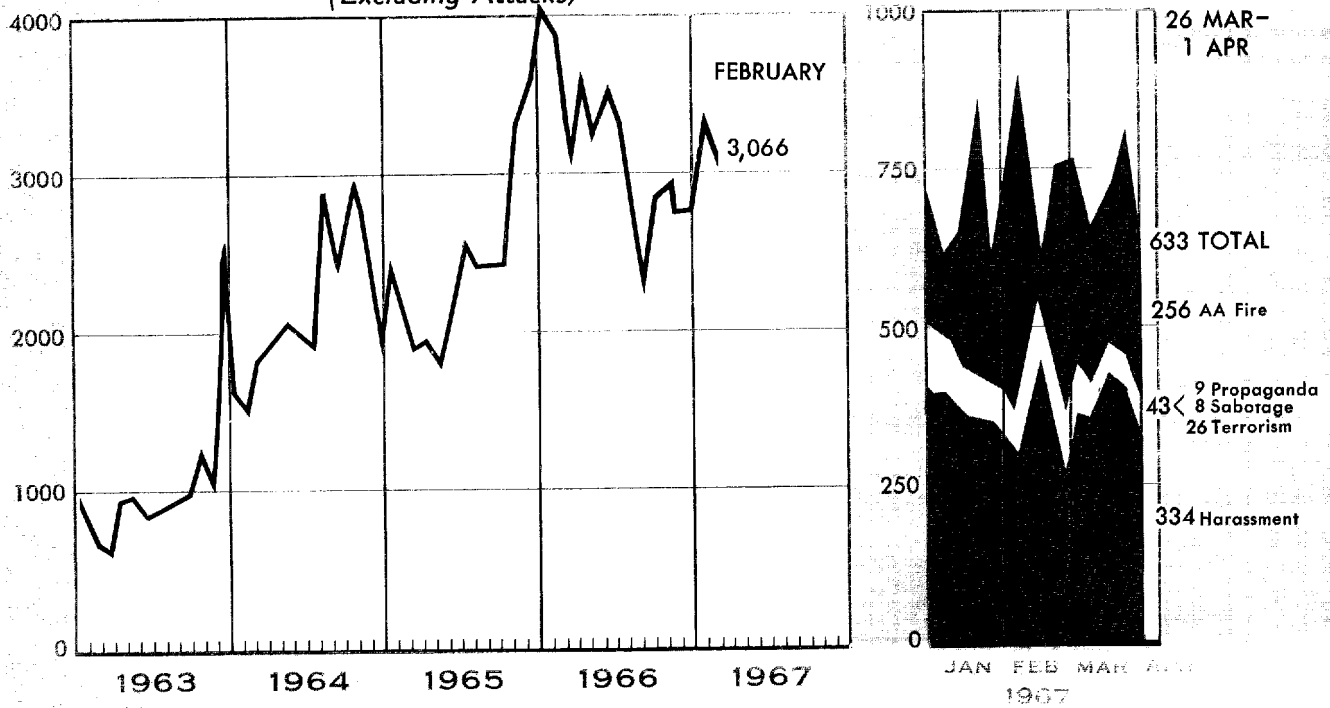
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*Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, beginning 12 February 1967, the weekly figure will represent only personnel killed.

Viet Cong Attacks



Viet Cong Incidents (Excluding Attacks)



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